



THE PHYSICIAN'S *Bookshelf*

COWDRY'S PROBLEMS OF AGING—Biological and Medical Aspects—Third Edition. Edited by Albert I. Lansing, Ph.D., Washington University, St. Louis, the Williams and Wilkins Company, Baltimore, 1952. 1,061 pages, \$15.00.

The third edition of the most authoritative treatise on the biology of aging brings to this important subject new and cogent information for the gerontologist. This is an essential volume for all physicians, not even excluding the pediatrician, because of its basic descriptions and data concerning fundamental problems of growth, development, and senescence. Here is assembled information concerning the comparative physiology and biochemistry of the mammalia, which is pertinent to the most important problems dealing with the finiteness of these species. Man is destined to age at rates characteristic for his type and conditioned by his hereditary legacy. The factors which influence the progress of this inevitable deterioration in an infinite universe are discussed with the wisdom, detachment and objectivity characteristic of philosophers who deal abstractly with a thesis. This book offers for the physician what the concept of rejuvenation might offer for those who feel that rejuvenation would supply them with a vigor beyond that which they might achieve as the natural consequence of experience and aging. The third edition differs considerably from the preceding editions; it does not supplant them, it embellishes them. It adds to the basic discussions those arguments and data which demonstrate that the concept of the aging process is not only one of constant evolution, but one in which active research is both simplifying and complicating the problem with the assurance ultimately of greater comprehension. A very valuable book which must be read to be appreciated, and an important addition to the library of a physician.

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SYNOPSIS OF GENITO-URINARY DISEASES—Fifth Edition. Austin I. Dodson, M.D., F.A.C.S., Professor of Genito-urinary Surgery, Medical College of Virginia; and Donald L. Gilbert, M.D., Instructor in Urology, Medical College of Virginia. The C. V. Mosby Company, St. Louis, 1952. 313 pages, \$4.00.

The Fifth Edition of Dodson and Gilbert, "Synopsis of Genito-urinary Diseases," is an excellent, concise and inexpensive book on urologic diseases. This volume, only slightly changed from the previous editions, has been prepared for the medical student or as a handy reference for the general practitioner. It is a small, easily handled book, having a good index, and covering a surprising number of subjects in a brief but adequate manner. There are chapters on urologic diagnoses, cystoscopic instruments, the need for cystoscopy, anatomy of the genito-urinary tract, and a discussion of most of the common diseases seen by the urologist.

This is a valuable book and will make a desirable addition to the library of the man practicing general medicine or surgery.

THE TOXEMIAS OF PREGNANCY—Second Edition. William J. Dieckmann, S.B., M.D., Mary Campau Ryerson Professor and Chairman of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, University of Chicago. The C. V. Mosby Company, St. Louis, 1952. 710 pages, 85 illustrations, \$14.50.

This is an extended version of the first edition, which appeared in 1941, and includes in the 200 added pages at least brief reference to practically everything which has been written regarding toxemias in the last decade. To readers of the previous edition it may be said that the revision is a similar encyclopedic recitation of facts and figures, put together without much transitional phraseology or topical organization, all of which makes for tiresome and difficult reading. However, practically everything pertaining to the subject has been set down, and no doubt those who are actively delving into the mysteries of the toxemias will be delighted to find so much compressed into 700 pages.

As in the first edition, the various chapters are grouped into six sections, the first of which deals with four somewhat unrelated phases of the situation, namely, history, classification, geographical distribution, and pathology. This is followed by a lengthy exposition concerning the almost endless array of physicochemical determinations which have been so popular with investigators in this field but which have yielded so little of lasting value to the clinician. Additional pathologic items, as well as an endocrine chapter, are thrown in with the physiologic material. Section III is concerned with the etiology of eclampsia, but regrettably the reader is not rewarded by finding here any concise presentation of the author's current views on the sequence of events leading to the classical clinical picture of eclampsia.

The next two sections are devoted to the clinical aspects of toxemia and to its treatment. The material on therapy is unnecessarily confusing and repetitious, owing to the separate considerations of convulsive and non-convulsive toxemia. The final section deals with maternal and fetal mortality and also with prenatal care—a subject which might be disposed of briefly earlier in the book. The last two pages of the text will be passed over quickly by the research worker, but should prove to be of particular interest to physicians in California where malpractice insurance rates are soaring to astronomical heights. These pages describe certain legal pitfalls which have trapped unwary obstetricians, although some of the examples quoted seem to have little or nothing to do with the subject of toxemia.

This monograph for the most part is quite uncritical and lacks adequate summarizations of what the author considers important in the tremendous mass of material which he has sifted. As a reference work for the investigator or teacher it now enjoys, of course, a monopoly in its field, particularly because there has been no second edition of the less ambitious but more readable volume by Dexter and Weiss (1941). For other purposes it cannot be seriously recommended.